



Geoduck Aquaculture Feasibility Project

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The name "geoduck" comes from the Nisqually Indian word meaning "dig deep".

Geoducks bury themselves up to a meter deep.

After digging about 1 meter, the adult geoduck settles in for 100 years or more.

For more information about the Geoduck Aquaculture Pilot Project, contact Celia Barton or Jeanne Koenings
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Legislature Funds Geoduck Pilot Project

The 2003 Legislature directed the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to develop a **Pilot Project** proposal to determine the feasibility of geoduck aquaculture on tidelands and submerged lands DNR manages in Puget Sound as a public trust. DNR is working with the University of Washington School of Aquatic & Fishery Sciences to design and conduct this Pilot Project. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the 18 Puget Sound Treaty Indian Tribes, and DNR jointly manage this Pilot Project.

This is the second edition of an e-newsletter designed to keep everyone informed about the progress of the Pilot Project.

What We've Been Hearing

We met with the Henderson & Nisqually Shellfish Protection District Stakeholders Group on December 10th. We presented the Pilot Project and handed out an opinion survey so that people could let us know what aquaculture impacts they think should be part of this pilot project. We've received a number of responses. Comments ranged from "I think it's a good

idea" to "At low tide, the white pipes sticking up are unattractive" and "Balanced access for individuals to state lands to harvest ducks. Aquaculture should also seed and help propagate ducks in mitigated lands for the public for each year a lease is held by aquaculture." We also answered some general questions about the geoduck fishery.



We are searching for a variety of groups to whom we can make a short presentation and

ask for opinions about geoduck aquaculture. A request was been made to Department of Ecology shoreline planners and the Puget Sound Action Team for the names of such groups, and, as a result, meetings have been set up with Water Resource Inventory Areas (WRIA) 14, 16, and 17, around the Hood Canal. These meetings are scheduled for late January and early February. We have also created a small poster display for the Pilot Project and hope to have it at the Hood Canal Environmental Achievement Awards Program in Silverdale in late January.

Meetings with shoreline planners in Puget Sound counties are being set up for January and February—we've met with the planner in Mason County. A meeting with Jefferson County is scheduled for early February. Contacts are also being made in Clallam, Island, King, Skagit, Snohomish, Thurston, Kitsap, and Whatcom counties. Calls are being made to County Commissions and County Councils in the Puget Sound counties to get their input, as well.

We are in the preliminary stages of setting up a meeting in Vancouver, Canada, with the federal and provincial geoduck fishery managers to learn more about the Canadian experience with geoduck aquaculture. The Canadians contracted with a geoduck grower about 8 years ago to do a pilot subtidal planting. In addition, the Underwater Harvesters Association in BC has been planting subtidal geoduck for several years although this organization has no long-term tenure of these lands.

A second meeting with the Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association and the Geoduck Harvesters Association will be held January 15th, 2004.

Geoducks are jointly managed by the Washington Department of Natural Resources, and Department of Fish & Wildlife and 18 Puget Sound Treaty Indian Tribes.

Puget Sound Treaty Indian Tribes have a right to 50% of the harvestable surplus of geoducks.

The Department of Natural Resources has proprietary rights over the State's half of the harvest and auctions the right to harvest geoducks to private companies and individuals.

The Department of Fish & Wildlife ensures the biological health of the geoduck fishery.

All three groups provide enforcement.

Pilot Project



Contracts have now been signed with The University of Washington School of Aquatic & Fishery Sciences (UW), the Pacific Shellfish Institute and Baywater, Inc. These three groups have begun work on the Pilot Project, doing an extensive literature review focusing on the biology, life history, ecology and economics of geoducks and geoduck aquaculture. They are preparing reports on research findings and commercial experience on intertidal and subtidal planting of geoducks; the development of

hatchery production of geoduck; findings on salinity and temperature effects on planting success; current state of knowledge relative to geoduck genetics and requirements for stock management; geoduck recruitment and population structure and assessing implications for geoduck enhancement; and finally, a Plan for Phase II which will suggest study sites, a study team, and goals and objectives for an extensive in-the-ground project.

We are also examining the possibility of a small jump-start to the in-the-ground part of this project. We are currently working on research design and funding issues. If we decide to proceed with this "jump-start", we would try to start with the very low tides this spring.

Aquaculture Impacts



While the UW School of Aquatic & Fishery Sciences studies the biological issues of geoduck aquaculture, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the 18 Puget Sound Treaty Indian Tribes have been meeting regularly to work on the legal and management issues surrounding geoduck aquaculture.

The next issue this group will address is the economics of geoduck aquaculture. The next meeting of this group is set for January 13, 2004.

New Web Page

We are setting up a new web page for the Geoduck Aquaculture Feasibility Pilot Project which should be on-line in late January. It will be part of the DNR Aquatic Resources web site and will be accessible via www.dnr.wa.gov/htdocs/aqr. The site will contain a Fact Sheet about the Pilot Project; all issues of this Newsletter; a public opinion survey; links to all the partners in the Pilot Project; and links to other agencies and organizations providing information about shellfish.

Feedback Needed

We are always looking for feedback about Geoduck Aquaculture and this Pilot Project. Please contact either of the two DNR project coordinators: Celia Barton, (360) 902-1025, e-mail: celia.barton@wadnr.wa.gov or Jeanne Koenings, (360) 902-1080, e-mail: jeanne.koenings@wadnr.wa.gov.